



IHST

International Helicopter Safety Team

Our Vision: An International Civil Helicopter Community With Zero Accidents

HELICOPTER FACTS

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12 Concerns for Helicopters Flying Over Mountains and Hilly Terrain

For safe and enjoyable flights in, around, or over mountains and hills, helicopter pilots must develop the skills, collect the knowledge, and appreciate the factors involved. Above all, pilots need to know their own limitations and those of the aircraft and stick to them.

With this in mind, the European Helicopter Safety Team has developed a new document on techniques for helicopter operations in mountainous and hilly terrain. This safety leaflet helps pilots and instructors understand basic principles, threats, errors and possible undesirable aircraft states when flying in mountainous terrain and it provides guidance to manage the risks associated with these operations. The complete document with diagrams and best practices can be found here: <http://easa.europa.eu/essi/ehest/2014/05/1689/>

In brief, here are the 12 most important considerations for mountain area helicopter operations:

- Be aware of aircraft performance and limitations.
- File a flight plan or notify someone of your intentions.
- Study the navigational charts carefully – do not rely on GPS.
- Get up to date weather information for a go/no-go decision.
- Don't go when winds are stronger than 25 knots.
- Fly at a safe altitude.
- Be aware of the wind direction and speed.
- Monitor for signs of changes in the weather.
- Be aware of the psychological and physiological effects of mountain flying.
- Always plan an escape route.
- Be aware of wind-shear and recovery actions to be taken.
- Before undertaking flights in mountains or hilly terrain, receive appropriate training from a qualified flight instructor who is experienced in mountain flying techniques.